

THE WORKS OF
ALFRED TENNYSON,
CABINET EDITION—IN TEN VOLUMES.

THE CABINET EDITION
OF MR. TENNYSON'S WORKS.

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THE WORKS OF
ALFRED TENNYSON.

EARLY POEMS.

HENRY S. KING & Co.
65, CORNHILL, & 12, PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON.
1874.

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TO THE QUEEN.

REVERED, beloved—O you that hold
A nobler office upon earth
Than arms, or power of brain, or birth
Could give the warrior kings of old,

Victoria,—since your Royal grace
To one of less desert allows
This laurel greener from the brows
Of him that utter'd nothing base ,

And should your greatness, and the care
That yokes with empire, yield you time
To make demand of modern rhyme
If aught of ancient worth be there ;

Then—while a sweeter music wakes,
And thro' wild March the throstle calls,
Where all about your palace-walls
The sun-lit almond-blossom shakes—

Take, Madam, this poor book of song ;
For tho' the faults were thick as dust
In vacant chambers, I could trust
Your kindness. May you rule us long,

And leave us rulers of your blood
As noble till the latest day !
May children of our children say,
“ She wrought her people lasting good ,

“ Her court was pure ; her life serene ;
God gave her peace ; her land reposed ;
A thousand claims to reverence closed
In her as Mother, Wife, and Queen ;

“And statesmen at her council met
Who knew the seasons when to take
Occasion by the hand, and make
The bounds of freedom wider yet

“By shaping some august decree,
Which kept her throne unshaken still.
Broad-based upon her people’s will,
And compass’d by the inviolate sea.”

MARCH 1851.

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P O E M S.



POEMS.

C L A R I B E L.

A MELODY.

I

WHERE Claribel low-lieth
The breezes pause and die,
Letting the rose-leaves fall ·
But the solemn oak-tree sigheth,
Thick-leaved, ambrosial,
With an ancient melody
Of an inward agony,
Where Claribel low-lieth.

II.

At eve the beetle boometh
Athwart the thicket lone :
At noon the wild bee hummeth
About the moss'd headstone :
At midnight the moon cometh,
And looketh down alone.

Her song the lintwhite swelleth,
The clear-voiced mavis dwelleth,
 The callow throstle lispeth,
The slumbrous wave outwel leth,
 The babbling runnel crisp eth,
The hollow grot replieth
 Where Claribel low lieth.

NOTHING WILL DIE.

WHEN will the stream be aweary of flowing
 Under my eye ?
 When will the wind be aweary of blowing
 Over the sky ?
 When will the clouds be aweary of fleeting ?
 When will the heart be aweary of beating ?
 And nature die ?
 Never, oh ! never, nothing will die ;
 The stream flows,
 The wind blows,
 The cloud fleets,
 The heart beats,
 Nothing will die.

Nothing will die ;
 All things will change
 Thro' eternity.
 'Tis the world's winter ;
 Autumn and summer
 Are gone long ago ;

Earth is dry to the centre,
But spring, a new-comer,
A spring rich and strange,
Shall make the winds blow
Round and round,
Thro' and thro',
 Here and there,
 Till the air
And the ground
Shall be fill'd with life anew.

The world was never made ;
It will change, but it will not fade.
So let the wind range ;
For even and morn
 Ever will be
 Thro' eternity.
Nothing was born ,
Nothing will die ;
All things will change.

ALL THINGS WILL DIE.

CLEARLY the blue river chimes in its flowing
Under my eye ;
Warmly and broadly the south winds are blowing
Over the sky.
One after another the white clouds are fleeting ;
Every heart this May-morning in joyance is beating
Full merrily ;
Yet all things must die.
The stream will cease to flow ;
The wind will cease to blow ;
The clouds will cease to fleet ,
The heart will cease to beat ,
For all things must die.
All things must die.
Spring will come never more .
Oh ! vanity !

Death waits at the door.
See ! our friends are all forsaking
The wine and the merrymaking.
We are call'd—we must go.
Laid low, very low,
In the dark we must lie.
The merry glees are still ;
The voice of the bird
Shall no more be heard,
Nor the wind on the hill.
Oh ! misery !
Hark ! death is calling
While I speak to ye,
The jaw is falling,
The red cheek paling,
The strong limbs failing ,
Ice with the warm blood mixing ,
The eyeballs fixing.
Nine times goes the passing bell :
Ye merry souls, farewell.

The old earth
Had a birth,
As all men know,
Long ago.
And the old earth must die.
So let the warm winds range,
And the blue wave beat the shore ;

For even and morn
Ye will never see
Thro' eternity.
All things were born.
Ye will come never more,
For all things must die.

THE KRAKEN.

BELOW the thunders of the upper deep ;
Far, far beneath in the abysmal sea,
His ancient, dreamless, uninvaded sleep
The Kraken sleepeth : faintest sunlights flee
About his shadowy sides : above him swell
Huge sponges of millennial growth and height ;
And far away into the sickly light,
From many a wondrous grot and secret cell
Unnumber'd and enormous polypi
Winnow with giant arms the slumbering green.
There hath he lain for ages and will lie
Battening upon huge seaworms in his sleep,
Until the latter fire shall heat the deep ;
Then once by man and angels to be seen,
In roaring he shall rise and on the surface die.

SONG.

THE winds, as at their hour of birth,
 Leaning upon the ridged sea,
Breathed low around the rolling earth
 With mellow preludes, "We are free"
The streams through many a lilyed row
 Down-carolling to the crisped sea,
Low-tinkled with a bell-like flow
 Atween the blossoms, "We are free."

LILIAN.

I.

AIRY, fairy Lilian,
 Flitting, fairy Lilian,
 When I ask her if she love me,
 Claps her tiny hands above me,
 Laughing all she can ;
 She'll not tell me if she love me,
 Cruel little Lilian.

II.

When my passion seeks
 Pleasance in love-sighs,
 She, looking thro' and thro' me
 Thoroughly to undo me,
 Smiling, never speaks .
 So innocent-arch, so cunning-simple,
 From beneath her gather'd wimple
 Glancing with black-beaded eyes,
 Till the lightning laughters dimple

The baby-roses in her cheeks ;
Then away she flies.

III.

Prythee weep, May Lilian !
Gaiety without eclipse
Wearieth me, May Lilian :
Thro' my very heart it thrillett
When from crimson-threaded lips
Silver-treble laughter trilleth :
Prythee weep, May Lilian.



IV.

Praying all I can,
If prayers will not hush thee,
Airy Lilian,
Like a rose-leaf I will crush thee,
Fairy Lilian.

ISABEL.

I.

EYES not down-dropt nor over bright, but fed
 With the clear-pointed flame of chastity,
 Clear, without heat, undying, tended by
 Pure vestal thoughts in the translucent fane
 Of her still spirit ; locks not wide-dispread,
 Madonna-wise on either side her head ;
 Sweet lips whereon perpetually did reign
 The summer calm of golden charity,
 Were fixed shadows of thy fixed mood,
 Revered Isabel, the crown and head,
 The stately flower of female fortitude,
 Of perfect wifehood and pure lowlihead.

II.

The intuitive decision of a bright
 And thorough-edged intellect to part
 Error from crime ; a prudence to withhold ;
 The laws of marriage character'd in gold

Upon the blanched tablets of her heart ;
 A love still burning upward, giving light
 To read those laws ; an accent very low
 In blandishment, but a most silver flow
 Of subtle-paced counsel in distress,
 Right to the heart and brain, tho' undescried,
 Winning its way with extreme gentleness
 Thro' all the outworks of suspicious pride ;
 A courage to endure and to obey ;
 A hate of gossip parlance, and of sway,
 Crown'd Isabel, thro' all her placid life,
 The queen of marriage, a most perfect wife.

III.

The mellow'd reflex of a winter moon ;
 A clear stream flowing with a muddy one,
 Till in its onward current it absorbs
 With swifter movement and in purer light
 The vexed eddies of its wayward brother :
 A leaning and upbearing parasite,
 Clothing the stem, which else had fallen quite
 With cluster'd flower-bells and ambrosial orbs
 Of rich fruit-bunches leaning on each other—
 Shadow forth thee :—the world hath not
 another.

(Tho' all her fairest forms are types of thee,
 And thou of God in thy great charity)
 Of such a finish'd chasten'd purity.

MARIANA.

" Mariana in the moated grange "
Measure for Measure

WITH blackest moss the flower-plots
Were thickly crusted, one and all :
The rusted nails fell from the knots

That held the pear to the gable-wall.
The broken sheds look'd sad and strange :
Unlifted was the clinking latch ;
Weeded and worn the ancient thatch
Upon the lonely moated grange.

She only said, " My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said ;
She said, " I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead ! "

Her tears fell with the dews at even ;
Her tears fell ere the dews were dried ,
She could not look on the sweet heaven,
Either at morn or eventide.

After the flitting of the bats,
When thickest dark did trance the sky,
She drew her casement-curtain by,
And glanced athwart the glooming flats.
She only said, "The night is dreary,
He cometh not," she said,
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

Upon the middle of the night,
Waking she heard the night-fowl crow.
The cock sung out an hour ere light:
From the dark fen the oxen's low
Came to her: without hope of change,
In sleep she seem'd to walk forlorn,
Till cold winds woke the gray-eyed morn
About the lonely moated grange.
She only said, "The day is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

About a stone-cast from the wall
A sluice with blacken'd waters slept,
And o'er it many, round and small,
The cluster'd marish-mosses crept
Hard by a poplar shook alway,
All silver-green with gnarled bark

For leagues no other tree did mark
The level waste, the rounding gray.

She only said, "My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

And ever when the moon was low,
And the shrill winds were up and away,
In the white curtain, to and fro,
She saw the gusty shadow sway.
But when the moon was very low,
And wild winds bound within their cell,
The shadow of the poplar fell
Upon her bed, across her brow.

She only said, "The night is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

All day within the dreamy house,
The doors upon their hinges creak'd;
The blue fly sung in the pane; the mouse
Behind the mouldering wainscot shriek'd,
Or from the crevice peer'd about.
Old faces glimmer'd thro' the doors,
Old footsteps trod the upper floors,
Old voices called her from without.

She only said, " My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said ;
She said, " I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead ! "

The sparrow's chirrup on the roof,
The slow clock ticking, and the sound
Which to the wooing wind aloof
The poplar made, did all confound
Her sense ; but most she loathed the hour
When the thick-moted sunbeam lay
Athwart the chambers, and the day
Was sloping toward his western bower.
Then, said she, " I am very dreary,
He will not come," she said ;
She wept, " I am aweary, aweary,
Oh God, that I were dead ! "

MARIANA IN THE SOUTH.

WITH one black shadow at its feet,
The house thro' all the level shines,
Close-latticed to the brooding heat,
And silent in its dusty vines :
A faint-blue ridge upon the right,
An empty river-bed before,
And shallows on a distant shore,
In glaring sand and inlets bright.

But "Ave Mary," made she moan,
And "Ave Mary," night and morn,
And "Ah," she sang, "to be all alone,
To live forgotten, and love forlorn."

She, as her carol sadder grew,
From brow and bosom slowly down
Thro' rosy taper fingers drew
Her streaming curls of deepest brown

To left and right, and made appear
 Still-lighted in a secret shrine,
 Her melancholy eyes divine,
 The home of woe without a tear.

And "Ave Mary," was her moan,
 "Madonna, sad is night and morn;"
 And "Ah," she sang, "to be all alone,
 To live forgotten, and love forlorn."

Till all the crimson changed, and past
 Into deep orange o'er the sea,
 Low on her knees herself she cast,
 Before Our Lady murmur'd she;
 Complaining, "Mother, give me grace
 To help me of my weary load"
 And on the liquid mirror glow'd
 The clear perfection of her face.

"Is this the form," she made her moan,
 "That won his praises night and morn?"
 And "Ah," she said, "but I wake alone,
 I sleep forgotten, I wake forlorn."

Nor bird would sing, nor lamb would bleat,
 Nor any cloud would cross the vault,
 But day increased from heat to heat,
 On stony drought and steaming salt;

Till now at noon she slept again,
And seem'd knee-deep in mountain grass,
And heard her native breezes pass,
And runlets babbling down the glen.
She breathed in sleep a lower moan,
And murmuring, as at night and morn,
She thought, " My spirit is here alone,
Walks forgotten, and is forlorn."

Dreaming, she knew it was a dream :
She felt he was and was not there.
She woke . the babble of the stream
Fell, and, without, the steady glare
Shrank one sick willow sere and small.
The river-bed was dusty-white ;
And all the furnace of the light
Struck up against the blinding wall.
She whisper'd, with a stifled moan
More inward than at night or morn,
" Sweet Mother, let me not here alone
Live forgotten and die forlorn."

And, rising, from her bosom drew
Old letters, breathing of her worth,
For " Love," they said, " must needs be true,
To what is loveliest upon earth."

An image seem'd to pass the door,
To look at her with slight, and say,
“But now thy beauty flows away,
So be alone for evermore.”

“O cruel heart,” she changed her tone,
“And cruel love, whose end is scorn,
Is this the end to be left alone,
To live forgotten, and die forlorn !”

But sometimes in the falling day
An image seem'd to pass the door,
To look into her eyes and say,
“But thou shalt be alone no more.”
And flaming downward over all
From heat to heat the day decreased,
And slowly rounded to the east
The one black shadow from the wall.

“The day to night,” she made her moan,
“The day to night, the night to morn,
And day and night I am left alone
To live forgotten, and love forlorn.”

At eve a dry cicala sung,
There came a sound as of the sea ;
Backward the lattice-blind she flung,
And lean'd upon the balcony.

There all in spaces rosy-bright
Large Hesper glitter'd on her tears,
And deepening thro' the silent spheres
Heaven over Heaven rose the night.
And weeping then she made her moan,
“The night comes on that knows not morn,
When I shall cease to be all alone,
To live forgotten, and love forlorn.”



TO —.

I.

CLEAR-HEADED friend, whose joyful scorn,
 Edged with sharp laughter, cuts awain
 The knots that tangle human creeds,
 The wounding cords that bind and strain
 The heart until it bleeds,
 Ray-fringed eyelids of the morn
 Roof not a glance so keen as thine :
 If aught of prophecy be mine,
 Thou wilt not live in vain.

II.

Low-cowering shall the Sophist sit ;
 Falsehood shall bare her plaited brow :
 Fair-fronted Truth shall droop not now
 With shrilling shafts of subtle wit.
 Nor martyr flames, nor trenchant swords
 Can do away that ancient lie ;
 A gentler death shall Falsehood die,
 Shot thro' and thro' with cunning words.

III.

Weak Truth a-leaning on her crutch,
Wan, wasted Truth in her utmost need,
Thy kingly intellect shall feed,
Until she be an athlete bold,
And weary with a finger's touch
Those writhed limbs of lightning speed ;
Like that strange angel which of old,
Until the breaking of the light,
Wrestled with wandering Israel,
Past Yabbok brook the livelong night,
And heaven's mazed signs stood still
In the dim tract of Penuel.

MADELINE.

I.

THOU art not steep'd in golden languors,
 No tranced summer calm is thine,
 Ever varying Madeline.
 Thro' light and shadow thou dost range,
 Sudden glances, sweet and strange,
 Delicious spites and darling angers,
 And airy forms of flitting change.

II.

Smiling, frowning, evermore,
 Thou art perfect in love-lore.
 Revealings deep and clear are thine
 Of wealthy smiles but who may know
 Whether smile or frown be fleeter ?
 Whether smile or frown be sweeter,
 Who may know ?
 Frowns perfect-sweet along the brow
 Light-glooming over eyes divine,
 Like little clouds sun-fringed, are thine,
 Ever varying Madeline.
 Thy smile and frown are not aloof
 From one another,
 Each to each is dearest brother ;

Hues of the silken sheeny woof
Momently shot into each other
All the mystery is thine ;
Smiling, frowning, evermore,
Thou art perfect in love-lore,
Ever varying Madeline.

III.

A subtle, sudden flame,
By veering passion fann'd,
About thee breaks and dances :
When I would kiss thy hand,
The flush of anger'd shame
O'erflows thy calmer glances,
And o'er black brows drops down
A sudden-curved frown :
But when I turn away,
Thou, willing me to stay,
Wooest not, nor vainly wranglest ;
But, looking fixedly the while,
All my bounding heart entanglest
In a golden-netted smile ;
Then in madness and in bliss,
If my lips should dare to kiss
Thy taper fingers amorously,
Again thou blushest angerly ;
And o'er black brows drops down
A sudden-curved frown.

SONG—THE OWL.

I.

WHEN cats run home and light is come,
And dew is cold upon the ground,
And the far-off stream is dumb,
And the whirring sail goes round,
And the whirring sail goes round ;
Alone and warming his five wits,
The white owl in the belfry sits.

II.

When merry milkmaids click the latch,
And rarely smells the new-mown hay,
And the cock hath sung beneath the thatch
Twice or thrice his roundelay,
Twice or thrice his roundelay ;
Alone and warming his five wits,
The white owl in the belfry sits.

SECOND SONG.

TO THE SAME

I.

THY tuwhits are lull'd, I wot,
Thy tuwhoos of yesternight,
Which upon the dark afloat,
So took echo with delight,
So took echo with delight,
That her voice untuneful grown,
Wears all day a fainter tone.

II.

I would mock thy chaunt anew ,
But I cannot mimick it .
Not a whit of thy tuwhoo,
Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,
Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,
With a lengthen'd loud halloo,
Tuwwoo, tuwhit, tuwhit, tuwhoo-o-o.

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE ARABIAN^{*}
NIGHTS.

WHEN the breeze of a joyful dawn blew free
In the silken sail of infancy,
The tide of time flow'd back with me,
 The forward-flowing tide of time ;
And many a sheeny summer-morn,
Adown the Tigris I was borne,
By Bagdat's shrines of fretted gold,
High-walled gardens green and old ;
True Mussulman was I and sworn,
 For it was in the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Anight my shallop, rustling thro'
The low and bloomed foliage, drove
The fragrant, glistening deeps, and clove
The citron-shadows in the blue :
By garden porches on the brim,
The costly doors flung open wide,

Gold glittering thro' lamplight dim,
And broider'd sofas on each side
In sooth it was a goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Often, where clear-stemm'd platans guard
The outlet, did I turn away
The boat-head down a broad canal
From the main river sluiced, where all
The sloping of the moon-lit sward
Was damask-work, and deep inlay
Of braided blooms unmown, which crept
Adown to where the water slept.

A goodly place, a goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

A motion from the river won
Ridged the smooth level, bearing on
My shallop thro' the star-strown calm,
Until another night in night
I enter'd, from the clearer light,
Imbower'd vaults of pillar'd palm,
Imprisoning sweets, which, as they climb
Heavenward, were stay'd beneath the dome
Of hollow boughs.—A goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Still onward ; and the clear canal
Is rounded to as clear a lake.
From the green rivage many a fall
Of diamond rilles musical,
Thro' little crystal arches low
Down from the central fountain's flow
Fall'n silver-chiming, seem'd to shake
The sparkling flints beneath the prow.

A goodly place, a goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Above thro' many a bowery turn
A walk with vary-colour'd shells
Wander'd engrain'd. On either side
All round about the fragrant marge
From fluted vase, and brazen urn
In order, eastern flowers large,
Some dropping low their crimson bells
Half-closed, and others studded wide
 With disks and tiars, fed the time
 With odour in the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Far off, and where the lemon grove
In closest coverture upsprung,
The living airs of middle night
Died round the bulbul as he sung ;

Not he : but something which possess'd
The darkness of the world, delight,
Life, anguish, death, immortal love,
Ceasing not, mingled, unrepress'd,
 Apart from place, withholding time,
 But flattering the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Black the garden-bowers and grots
Slumber'd : the solemn palms were ranged
Above, unwoo'd of summer wind :
A sudden splendour from behind
Flush'd all the leaves with rich gold-green,
And, flowing rapidly between
Their interspaces, counterchanged
The level lake with diamond-plots
 Of dark and bright. A lovely time,
 For it was in the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Dark-blue the deep sphere overhead,
Distinct with vivid stars inlaid,
Grew darker from that under-flame :
So, leaping lightly from the boat,
With silver anchor left afloat,
In marvel whence that glory came
Upon me, as in sleep I sank
In cool soft turf upon the bank,

Entranced with that place and time,
So worthy of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Thence thro' the garden I was drawn—
A realm of pleasance, many a mound,
And many a shadow-chequer'd lawn
Full of the city's stilly sound,
And deep myrrh-thickets blowing round
The stately cedar, tamarisks,
Thick rosaries of scented thorn,
Tall orient shrubs, and obelisks
Graven with emblems of the time,
In honour of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

With dazed vision unawares
From the long alley's latticed shade
Emerged, I came upon the great
Pavilion of the Caliphat.
Right to the carven cedarn doors,
Flung inward over spangled floors,
Broad-baséd flights of marble stairs
Ran up with golden balustrade,
After the fashion of the time,
And humour of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

The fourscore windows all alight
As with the quintessence of flame,
A million tapers flaring bright
From twisted silvers look'd to shame
The hollow-vaulted dark, and stream'd
Upon the mooned domes aloof
In inmost Bagdat, till there seem'd
Hundreds of crescents on the roof
Of night new-risen, that marvellous time
To celebrate the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Then stole I up, and trancedly
Gazed on the Persian girl alone,
Serene with argent-lidded eyes
Amorous, and lashes like to rays
Of darkness, and a brow of pearl
Tressed with redolent ebony,
In many a dark delicious curl,
Flowing beneath her rose-hued zone ;
The sweetest lady of the time,
Well worthy of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Six columns, three on either side,
Pure silver, underprop't a rich
Throne of the massive ore, from which
Down-droop'd, in many a floating fold,

Engarlanded and diaper'd
With inwrought flowers, a cloth of gold.
Thereon, his deep eye laughter-stirr'd
With merriment of kingly pride,

Sole star of all that place and time,
I saw him—in his golden prime,

THE GOOD HAROUN ALRASCHID.

ODE TO MEMORY.

ADDRESSED TO ——.

I.

THOU who stealest fire,
 From the fountains of the past,
 To glorify the present ; oh, haste,
 Visit my low desire !

Strengthen me, enlighten me !
 I faint in this obscurity,
 Thou dewy dawn of memory.

II.

Come not as thou camest of late,
 Flinging the gloom of yesternight
 On the white day ; but robed in soften'd light
 Of orient state.
 Whilome thou camest with the morning mist,
 Even as a maid, whose stately brow
 The dew-impearled winds of dawn have kiss'd,
 When, she, as thou,

Stays on her floating locks, the lovely freight
 Of overflowing blooms, and earliest shoots
 Of orient green, giving safe pledge of fruits,
 Which in wintertide shall star
 The black earth with brilliance rare.

III.

Whilome thou camest with the morning mist,
 And with the evening cloud,
 Showering thy gleaned wealth into my open breast
 (Those peerless flowers which in the rudest wind
 Never grow sere,
 When rooted in the garden of the mind,
 Because they are the earliest of the year).
 Nor was the night thy shroud.
 In sweet dreams softer than unbroken rest
 Thou leddest by the hand thine infant Hope.
 The eddying of her garments caught from thee
 The light of thy great presence, and the cope
 Of the half-attain'd futurity,
 Tho' deep not fathomless,
 Was cloven with the million stars which tremble
 O'er the deep mind of dauntless infancy.
 Small thought was there of life's distress ;
 For sure she deem'd no mist of earth could dull
 Those spirit-thrilling eyes so keen and beautiful :
 Sure she was nigher to heaven's spheres,

Listening the lordly music flowing from
The illimitable years.

O strengthen me, enlighten me !
I faint in this obscurity,
Thou dewy dawn of memory.

IV.

Come forth, I charge thee, arise,
Thou of the many tongues, the myriad eyes !
Thou comest not with shows of flaunting vines
Unto mine inner eye,
Divinest Memory !
Thou wert not nursed by the waterfall
Which ever sounds and shines
A pillar of white light upon the wall
Of purple cliffs, aloof descried :
Come from the woods that belt the gray hill-side,
The seven elms, the poplars four
That stand beside my father's door,
And chiefly from the brook that loves
To purl o'er matted cress and ribbed sand,
Or dimple in the dark of rushy coves,
Drawing into his narrow earthen urn,
In every elbow and turn,
The filter'd tribute of the rough woodland
O ! hither lead thy feet !
Pour round mine ears the livelong bleat

Of the thick-fleeced sheep from wattled folds,
Upon the ridged wolds,
When the first matin-song hath waken'd loud
Over the dark dewy earth forlorn,
What time the amber morn
Forth gushes from beneath a low-hung cloud.

v.

Large dowries doth the raptured eye
To the young spirit present
When first she is wed ;
And like a bride of old
In triumph led,
With music and sweet showers
Of festal flowers,
Unto the dwelling she must sway.
Well hast thou done, great artist Memory,
In setting round thy first experiment
With royal frame-work of wrought gold ;
Needs must thou dearly love thy first essay,
And foremost in thy various gallery
Place it, where sweetest sunlight falls
Upon the storied walls ,
For the discovery
And newness of thine art so pleased thee,
That all which thou hast drawn of fairest
Or boldest since, but lightly weighs

With thee unto the love thou bearest
The first-born of thy genius. Artist-like,
Ever retiring thou dost gaze
On the prime labour of thine early days :
No matter what the sketch might be ;
Whether the high field on the bushless Pike,
Or even a sand-built ridge
Of heaped hills that mound the sea,
Overblown with murmurs harsh,
Or even a lowly cottage whence we see
Stretched wide and wild the waste enormous marsh,
Where from the frequent bridge,
Like emblems of infinity,
The trenched waters run from sky to sky ;
Or a garden bower'd close
With plaited alleys of the trailing rose,
Long alleys falling down to twilight grots,
Or opening upon level plots
Of crowned lilies, standing near
Purple-spiked lavender :
Whither in after life retired
From brawling storms,
From weary wind,
With youthful fancy re-inspired,
We may hold converse with all forms
Of the many-sided mind,
And those whom passion hath not blinded,
Subtle-thoughted, myriad-minded.

My friend, with you to live alone,
Were how much better than to own
A crown, a sceptre, and a throne !

O strengthen me, enlighten me !
I faint in this obscurity,
Thou dewy dawn of memory.

SONG.

I.

A SPIRIT haunts the year's last hours
 Dwelling amid these yellowing bowers :
 To himself he talks ;
 For at eventide, listening earnestly,
 At his work you may hear him sob and sigh
 In the walks ;
 Earthward he boweth the heavy stalks
 Of the mouldering flowers :
 Heavily hangs the broad sunflower
 Over its grave i' the earth so chilly ;
 Heavily hangs the hollyhock,
 Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

II

The air is damp, and hush'd, and close,
 As a sick man's room when he taketh repose
 An hour before death ;
 My very heart faints and my whole soul grieves
 At the moist rich smell of the rotting leaves,

And the breath
Of the fading edges of box 'beneath,
And the year's last rose.

Heavily hangs the broad sunflower
Over its grave i' the earth so chilly ;
Heavily hangs the hollyhock,
Heavily hangs the tiger-lily

A CHARACTER.

WITH a half-glance upon the sky
At night he said, "The wanderings
Of this most intricate Universe
Teach me the nothingness of things."
Yet could not all creation pierce
Beyond the bottom of his eye.

He spake of beauty : that the dull
Saw no divinity in grass,
Life in dead stones, or spirit in air ;
Then looking as 'twere in a glass,
He smooth'd his chin and sleek'd his hair,
And said the earth was beautiful.

He spake of virtue : not the gods
More purely, when they wish to charm
Pallas and Juno sitting by :
And with a sweeping of the arm,
And a lack-lustre dead-blue eye,
Devolved his rounded periods.

Most delicately hour by hour
He canvass'd human mysteries,
And trod on silk, as if the winds
Blew his own praises in his eyes,
And stood aloof from other minds
In impotence of fancied power.

With lips depress'd as he were meek,
Himself unto himself he sold :
Upon himse'f himself did feed :
Quiet, dispassionate, and cold,
And other than his form of creed,
With chisell'd features clear and sleek.

THE POET.

THE poet in a golden clime was born,
With golden stars above ;
Dower'd with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn,
The love of love.

He saw thro' life and death, thro' good and ill,
He saw thro' his own soul
The marvel of the everlasting will,
An open scroll,

Before him lay : with echoing feet he threaded
The secretest walks of fame :
The viewless arrows of his thoughts were headed
And wing'd with flame,

Like Indian reeds blown from his silver tongue,
And of so fierce a flight,
From Calpe unto Caucasus they sung,
Filling with light

And vagrant melodies the winds which bore
 Them earthward till they lit ;
Then, like the arrow-seeds of the field flower,
 The fruitful wit

Cleaving, took root, and springing forth anew
 Where'er they fell, behold,
Like to the mother plant in semblance, grew
 A flower all gold,

And bravely furnish'd all abroad to fling
 The winged shafts of truth,
To throng with stately blooms the breathing spring
 Of Hope and Youth.

So many minds did gird their orbs with beams,
 Tho' one did fling the fire.
Heaven flow'd upon the soul in many dreams
 Of high desire.

Thus truth was multiplied on truth, the world
 Like one great garden show'd,
And thro' the wreaths of floating dark upcurl'd.
 Rare sunrise flow'd.

And Freedom rear'd in that august sunrise
 Her beaut'ful bold brow,
When rites and forms before his burning eyes
 Melted like snow.

There was no blood upon her maiden robes
Sunn'd by those orient skies ;
But round about the circles of the globes
Of her keen eyes

And in her raiment's hem was traced in flame
WISDOM, a name to shake
All evil dreams of power—a sacred name.
And when she spake,

Her words did gather thunder as they ran,
And as the lightning to the thunder
Which follows it, riving the spirit of man,
Making earth wonder,

So was their meaning to her words. No sword
Of wrath her right arm whirl'd,
But one poor poet's scroll, and with *his* word
She shook the world.



THE POET'S MIND.

I.

Vex not thou the poet's mind
 With thy shallow wit :
 Vex not thou the poet's mind ;
 For thou canst not fathom it.
 Clear and bright it should be ever,
 Flowing like a crystal river ;
 Bright as light, and clear as wind.

II.

Dark-brow'd sophist, come not anear ;
 All the place is holy ground ;
 Hollow smile and frozen sneer
 Come not here.
 Holy water will I pour
 Into every spicy flower
 Of the laurel-shrubs that hedge it around.
 The flowers would faint at your cruel cheer.
 In your eye there is death,
 There is frost in your breath

Which would blight the plants.

Where you stand you cannot hear
From the groves within
The wild-bird's din.

In the heart of the garden the merry bird chants,
It would fall to the ground if you came in.

In the middle leaps a fountain
Like sheet lightning,
Ever brightening

With a low melodious thunder ,
All day and all night it is ever drawn
From the brain of the purple mountain
Which stands in the distance yonder :
It springs on a level of bowery lawn,
And the mountain draws it from Heaven above,
And it sings a song of undying love ;
And yet, tho' its voice be so clear and full ,
You never would hear it ; your ears are so dull ,
So keep where you are : you are foul with sin ;
It would shrink to the earth if you came in.

THE SEA-FAIRIES.

SLOW sail'd the weary mariners and saw,
Betwixt the green brink and the running foam,
Sweet faces, rounded arms, and bosoms prest
To little harps of gold, and while they mused,
Whispering to each other half in fear,
Shrill music reach'd them on the middle sea.

Whither away, whither away, whither away? fly no more.

Whither away from the high green field, and the happy blossoming shore?

Day and night to the billow the fountain calls:

Down shower the gambolling waterfalls

From wandering over the lea:

Out of the live-green heart of the dells

They freshen the silvery-crimson shells,

And thick with white bells the clover-hill swells

High over the full-toned sea:

O hither, come hither and furl your sails,

Come hither to me and to me:

Hither, come hither and frolic and play,
Here it is only the mew that wails,
We will sing to you all the day :
Mariner, mariner, furl your sails,
For here are the blissful downs and dales,
And merrily, merrily carol the gales,
And the spangle dances in bight and bay,
And the rainbow forms and flies on the land
Over the islands free ;
And the rainbow lives in the curve of the sand ;
Hither, come hither and see ,
And the rainbow hangs on the poising wave,
And sweet is the colour of cove and cave,
And sweet shall your welcome be .
O hither, come hither, and be our lords,
For merry brides are we
We will kiss sweet kisses, and speak sweet words
O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten
With pleasure and love and jubilee
O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten
When the sharp clear twang of the golden chords
Runs up the ridged sea.
Who can light on as happy a shore
All the world o'er, all the world o'er ?
Whither away? listen and stay : mariner, mariner, fly
no more.

THE DESERTED HOUSE.

I.

LIFE and Thought have gone away
Side by side,
Leaving door and windows wide:
Careless tenants they !

II.

All within is dark as night
In the windows is no light,
And no murmur at the door,
So frequent on its hinge before

III.

Close the door, the shutters close,
Or thro' the windows we shall see
The nakedness and vacancy
Of the dark deserted house.

IV

Come away . no more of mirth
Is here or merry-making sound.
The house was builded of the earth,
And shall fall again to ground

V

Come away . for Life and Thought
Here no longer dwell ;
But in a city glorious—
A great and distant city—have bought
A mansion incorruptible.
Would they could have stayed with us !

THE DYING SWAN.

I

THE plain was grassy, wild and bare,
 Wide, wild, and open to the air,
 Which had built up everywhere

An under-roof of doleful gray.
 With an inner voice the river ran,
 Adown it floated a dying swan,
 And loudly did lament.
 It was the middle of the day.
 Ever the weary wind went on,
 And took the reed-tops as it went.

II.

Some blue peaks in the distance rose,
 And white against the cold-white sky,
 Shone out their crowning snows,
 One willow over the river wept,
 And shook the wave as the wind did sigh ,
 Above in the wind was the swallow,
 Chasing itself at its own wild will,
 And far thro' the marish green and still
 The tangled water-courses slept,
 Shot over with purple, and green, and yellow.

III

The wild swan's death-hymn took the soul
Of that waste place with joy
Hidden in sorrow · at first to the ear
The warble was low, and full and clear ;
And floating about the under-sky,
Prevailing in weakness, the coronach stole
Sometimes afar, and sometimes anear ,
But anon her awful jubilant voice,
With a music strange and manifold,
Flow'd forth on a carol free and bold ;
As when a mighty people rejoice
With shawms, and with cymbals, and harps of gold,
And the tumult of their acclaim is roll'd
Thro' the open gates of the city afar,
To the shepherd who watcheth the evening star.
And the creeping mosses and clambering weeds,
And the willow-branches hoar and dank,
And the wavy swell of the southing reeds,
And the wave-worn horns of the echoing bank,
And the silvery marish-flowers that throng
The desolate creeks and pools among,
Were flooded over with eddying song.

A DIRGE.

I.

Now is done thy long day's work ;
Fold thy palms across thy breast,
Fold thine arms, turn to thy rest.

Let them rave.

Shadows of the silver birk
Sweep the green that folds thy grave.

Let them rave.

II.

Thee nor carketh care nor slander ;
Nothing but the small cold worm
Fretteth thine enshrouded form.

Let them rave.

Light and shadow ever wander
O'er the green that folds thy grave.

Let them rave.

III.

Thou wilt not turn upon thy bed ;
Chaunteth not the brooding bee
Sweeter tones than calumny ?

Let them rave.

Thou wilt never raise thine head
From the green that folds thy grave.

Let them rave.

IV.

Crocodiles wept tears for thee ;
The woodbine and eglatere
Drip sweeter dews than traitor's tear.

Let them rave.

Rain makes music in the tree
O'er the green that folds thy grave.

Let them rave.

V.

Round thee blow, self-pleached deep,
Bramble roses, faint and pale,
And long purples of the dale.

Let them rave.

These in every shower creep
Thro' the green that folds thy grave.

Let them rave.

VI.

The gold-eyed kingcups fine ;
The frail bluebell peereth over
Rare broidry of the purple clover.

Let them rave.

Kings have no such couch as thine,
As the green that folds thy grave.

Let them rave.

VII.

Wild words wander here and there
God's great gift of speech abused
Makes thy memory confused :

But let them rave.

The balm-cricket carols clear
In the green that folds thy grave.

Let them rave

LOVE AND DEATH.

WHAT time the mighty moon was gathering light
Love paced the thymy plots of Paradise,
And all about him roll'd his lustrous eyes ,
When, turning round a cassia, full in view,
Death, walking all alone beneath a yew,
And talking to himself, first met his sight :
“ You must begone,” said Death, “ these walks are
mine.”

Love wept and spread his sheeny vans for flight ;
Yet ere he parted said, “ This hour is thine :
Thou art the shadow of life, and as the tree
Stands in the sun and shadows all beneath,
So in the light of great eternity
Life eminent creates the shade of death ;
The shadow passeth when the tree shall fall,
But I shall reign for ever over all.”

THE BALLAD OF ORIANA.

My heart is wasted with my woe,
Oriana.

There is no rest for me below,
Oriana.

When the long dun wolds are ribb'd with snow,
And loud the Norland whirlwinds blow,
Oriana,

Alone I wander to and fro,
Oriana.

Ere the light on dark was growing,
Oriana,

At midnight the cock was crowing,
Oriana :

Winds were blowing, waters flowing,
We heard the steeds to battle going,
Oriana ;

Aloud the hollow bugle blowing,
Oriana.

In the yew-wood black as night,
Oriana,
Ere I rode into the fight,
Oriana,
While blissful tears blinded my sight
By star-shine and by moonlight,
Oriana,
I to thee my troth did plight,
Oriana.

She stood upon the castle wall,
Oriana:
She watch'd my crest among them all,
Oriana :
She saw me fight, she heard me call,
When forth there stept a foeman tall,
Oriana,
Atween me and the castle wall,
Oriana.

The bitter arrow went aside,
Oriana .
The false, false arrow went aside,
Oriana :
The damned arrow glanced aside,
And pierced thy heart, my love, my bride,
Oriana !
Thy heart, my life, my love, my bride,
Oriana !

Oh ! narrow, narrow was the space,
Oriana.

Loud, loud rung out the bugle's brays,
Oriana.

Oh ! deathful stabs were dealt apace,
The battle deepen'd in its place,
Oriana ;

But I was down upon my face,
Oriana.

They should have stabb'd me where I lay,
Oriana !

How could I rise and come away,
Oriana ?

How could I look upon the day ?
They should have stabb'd me where I lay,
Oriana —

They should have trod me into clay,
Oriana

O breaking heart that will not break,
Oriana !

O pale, pale face so sweet and meek,
Oriana !

Thou smilest, but thou dost not speak,
And then the tears run down my cheek,
Oriana :

What wantest thou ? whom dost thou seek,
Oriana ?

I cry aloud : none hear my cries,
Oriana.

'Thou comest between me and the skies,
Oriana.

I feel the tears of blood arise
Up from my heart unto my eyes,
Oriana.

Within thy heart my arrow lies,
Oriana.

O cursed hand ! O cursed blow !
Oriana !

O happy thou that liest low,
Oriana !

All night the silence seems to flow
Beside me in my utter woe,
Oriana.

A weary, weary way I go,
Oriana.

When Norland winds pipe down the sea,
Oriana,

I walk, I dare not think of thee,
Oriana.

Thou liest beneath the greenwood tree,
I dare not die and come to thee,
Oriana.

I hear the roaring of the sea,
Oriana

CIRCUMSTANCE.

Two children in two neighbour villages
Playing mad pranks along the heathy leas ;
Two strangers meeting at a festival ,
Two lovers whispering by an orchard wall ,
Two lives bound fast in one with golden ease ;
Two graves grass-green beside a gray church-tower
Wash'd with still rains and daisy-blossomed ;
Two children in one hamlet born and bred ,
So runs the round of life from hour to hour

THE MERMAN.

I.

WHO would be
A merman bold,
Sitting alone,
Singing alone
Under the sea,
With a crown of gold,
On a throne?

II.

I would be a merman bold,
I would sit and sing the whole of the day ;
I would fill the sea-halls with a voice of power ;
But at night I would roam abroad and play
With the mermaids in and out of the rocks,
Dressing their hair with the white sea-flower ;
And holding them back by their flowing locks
I would kiss them often under the sea,
And kiss them again till they kiss'd me
Laughingly, laughingly ;

And then we would wander away, away
To the pale-green sea-groves straight and high,
Chasing each other merrily.

III.

There would be neither moon nor star ;
But the wave would make music above us afar—
Low thunder and light in the magic night—
Neither moon nor star.

We would call aloud in the dreamy dells,
Call to each other and whoop and cry
All night, merrily, merrily ;
They would pelt me with starry spangles and shells,
Laughing and clapping their hands between,

All night, merrily, merrily :
But I would throw to them back in mine
Turkis and agate and almondine ·
Then leaping out upon them unseen
I would kiss them often under the sea,
And kiss them again till they kiss'd me
Laughingly, laughingly.

Oh ! what a happy life were mine
Under the hollow-hung ocean green !
Soft are the moss-beds under the sea ;
We would live merrily, merrily.

THE MERMAID.

I.

WHO would be
A mermaid fair,
Singing alone,
Combing her hair
Under the sea,
In a golden curl
With a comb of pearl,
On a throne?

II

I would be a mermaid fair ;
I would sing to myself the whole of the day ;
With a comb of pearl I would comb my hair ;
And still as I comb'd I would sing and say,
“ Who is it loves me? who loves not me ? ”
I would comb my hair till my ringlets would fall
Low adown, low adown,

From under my starry sea-bud crown
 Low adown and around,
And I should look like a fountain of gold
 Springing alone
With a shrill inner sound,
 Over the throne
 In the midst of the hall ;
Till that great sea-snake under the sea
From his coiled sleeps in the central deeps
Would slowly trail himself sevenfold
Round the hall where I sate, and look in at the gate
With his large calm eyes for the love of me.
And all the mermen under the sea
Would feel their immortality
Die in their hearts for the love of me.

III

But at night I would wander away, away,
I would fling on each side my low-flowing locks,
And lightly vault from the throne and play
 With the mermen in and out of the rocks ;
We would run to and fro, and hide and seek,
 On the broad sea-wolds in the crimson shells,
 Whose silvery spikes are highest the sea
But if any came near I would call, and shriek,
And adown the steep like a wave I would leap
 From the diamond-ledges that jut from the dells ,

For I would not be kiss'd by all who would list,
 Of the bold merry mermen under the sea ,
They would sue me, and woo me, and flatter me,
 In the purple twilights under the sea ;
But the king of them all would carry me,
 Woo me, and win me, and marry me,
In the branching jaspers under the sea ;
Then all the dry pied things that be
 In the hueless mosses under the sea
Would curl round my silver feet silently,
 All looking up for the love of me.
And if I should carol aloud, from aloft
 All things that are forked, and horned, and soft
Would lean out from the hollow sphere of the sea.
 All looking down for the love of me.

ADELINE

I.

MYSTERY of mysteries,
 Faintly smiling Adeline,
 Scarce of earth nor all divine,
 Nor unhappy, nor at rest,
 But beyond expression fair
 With thy floating flaxen hair ;
 Thy rose-lips and full blue eyes
 Take the heart from out my breast.
 Wherfore those dim looks of thine,
 Shadowy, dreaming Adeline ?

II.

Whence that airy bloom of thine,
 Like a lily which the sun
 Looks thro' in his sad decline,
 And a rose-bush leans upon,

Thou that faintly smilest still,
As a Naiad in a well,
Looking at the set of day,
Or a phantom two hours old
Of a maiden past away,
Ere the placid lips be cold?
Wherefore those faint smiles of thine,
Spiritual Adeline?

III.

What hope or fear or joy is thine?
Who talketh with thee, Adeline?
For sure thou art not all alone.
Do beating hearts of salient springs
Keep measure with thine own?
Hast thou heard the butterflies
What they say betwixt their wings?
Or in stillest evenings
With what voice the violet woos
To his heart the silver dews?
Or when little airs arise,
How the merry bluebell rings
To the mosses underneath?
Hast thou look'd upon the breath
Of the lilies at sunrise?
Wherefore that faint smile of thine,
Shadowy, dreaming Adeline?

IV.

Some honey-converse feeds thy mind ;
Some spirit of a crimson rose
In love with thee forgets to close
His curtains, wasting odorous sighs
All night long on darkness blind.
What aileth thee ? whom waitest thou
With thy soften'd, shadow'd brow,
And those dew-lit eyes of thine,
Thou faint smiler, Adeline ?

V.

Lovest thou the doleful wind
When thou gazest at the skies ?
Doth the low-tongued Orient
Wander from the side of the morn,
Dripping with Sabæan spice
On thy pillow, lowly bent
With melodious airs lovelorn,
Breathing Light against thy face,
While his locks a-drooping twined
Round thy neck in subtle ring
Make a carcanet of rays,
And ye talk together still,
In the language wherewith Spring
Letters cowslips on the hill ?
Hence that look and smile of thine,
Spiritual Adeline.

MARGARET.

I.

O SWEET pale Margaret,
O rare pale Margaret,
What lit your eyes with tearful power,
Like moonlight on a falling shower?
Who lent you, love, your mortal dower
 Of pensive thought and aspect pale,
 Your melancholy sweet and frail
As perfume of the cuckoo-flower?
From the westward-winding flood,
From the evening-lighted wood,
 From all things outward you have won
 A tearful grace, as tho' you stood
 Between the rainbow and the sun.
The very smile before you speak,
That dimples your transparent cheek,

Encircles all the heart, and feedeth
 The senses with a still delight
 Of dainty sorrow without sound,
 Like the tender amber round,
 Which the moon about her spreadeth,
 Moving thro' a fleecy night.

II.

You love, remaining peacefully,
 To hear the murmur of the strife,
 But enter not the toil of life.
 Your spirit is the calmed sea,
 Laid by the tumult of the fight.
 You are the evening star, alway
 Remaining betwixt dark and bright :
 Lull'd echoes of laborious day
 Come to you, gleams of mellow light
 Float by you on the verge of night.

III

What can it matter, Margaret,
 What songs below the waning stars
 The lion-heart, Plantagenet,
 Sang looking thro' his prison bars ?
 Exquisite Margaret, who can tell
 The last wild thought of Chatelet,
 Just ere the falling axe did part
 The burning brain from the true heart,
 Even in her sight he loved so well ?

IV.

A fairy shield your Genius made
And gave you on your natal day.
Your sorrow, only sorrow's shade,
Keeps real sorrow far away.
You move not in such solitudes,
You are not less divine,
But more human in your moods,
Than your twin-sister, Adeline.
Your hair is darker, and your eyes
Touch'd with a somewhat darker hue,
And less aerially blue,
But ever trembling thro' the dew
Of dainty-woeful sympathies.

V.

O sweet pale Margaret,
O rare pale Margaret,
Come down, come down, and hear me speak
Tie up the ringlets on your cheek:
The sun is just about to set,
The arching limes are tall and shady,
And faint, rainy lights are seen,
Moving in the leavy beech.

Rise from the feast of sorrow, lady,
Where all day long you sit between
Joy and woe, and whisper each.
Or only look across the lawn,
Look out below your bower-eaves,
Look down, and let your blue eyes dawn
Upon me thro' the jasmine leaves

ELEANORE.

I.

THY dark eyes open'd not,
Nor first reveal'd themselves to English air,
For there is nothing here,
Which, from the outward to the inward brought
Moulded thy baby thought.
Far off from human neighbourhood,
Thou wert born, on a summer morn,
A mile beneath the cedar-wood.
Thy bounteous forehead was not fann'd
With breezes from our oaken glades,
But thou wert nursed in some delicious land
Of lavish lights, and floating shades :
And flattering thy childish thought
The oriental fairy brought,
At the moment of thy birth,

From old well-heads of haunted rills,
And the hearts of purple hills,
 And shadow'd coves on a sunny shore,
 The choicest wealth of all the earth,
Jewel or shell, or starry ore,
 To deck thy cradle, Eleanore.

II.

Or the yellow-banded bees,
Thro' half-open lattices
Coming in the scented breeze,
 Fed thee, a child, lying alone,
 With whitest honey in fairy gardens cull'd—
A glorious child, dreaming alone,
 In silk-soft folds, upon yielding down,
With the hum of swarming bees
 Into dreamful slumber lull'd.

III.

Who may minister to thee?
Summer herself should minister
 To thee, with fruitage golden-rinded
 On golden salvers, or it may be,
Youngest Autumn, in a bower
 Grape-thicken'd from the light, and blinded
 With many a deep-hued bell-like flower

Of fragrant trailers, when the air
Sleepeth over all the heaven,
And the crag that fronts the Even,
All along the shadowy shore,
Crimsons over an inland mere,
Eleanore !

IV.

How may full-sail'd verse express,
How may measured words adore
The full-flowing harmony
Of thy swan-like stateliness,
Eleanore ?
The luxuriant symmetry
Of thy floating gracefulness,
Eleanore ?
Every turn and glance of thine,
Every lineament divine,
Eleanore,
And the steady sunset glow,
That stays upon thee? For in thee
Is nothing sudden, nothing single ;
Like two streams of incense free
From one censer, in one shrine,
Thought and motion mingle,
Mingle ever. Motions flow
To one another, even as tho'

They were modulated so
 To an unheard melody,
 Which lives about thee, and a sweep
 Of richest pauses, evermore
 Drawn from each other mellow-deep ;
 Who may express thee, Eleanore ?

V.

I stand before thee, Eleanore ;
 I see thy beauty gradually unfold,
 Daily and hourly, more and more.
 I muse, as in a trance, the while
 Slowly, as from a cloud of gold.
 Comes out thy deep ambrosial smile.
 I muse, as in a trance, whene'er
 The languors of thy love-deep eyes
 Float on to me. I would I were
 So tranced, so rapt in ecstasies,
 To stand apart, and to adore,
 Gazing on thee for evermore,
 Serene, imperial Eleanore !

VI.

Sometimes, with most intensity
 Gazing, I seem to see
 Thought folded over thought, smiling asleep.
 Slowly awaken'd, grow so full and deep
 In thy large eyes, that, overpower'd quite,

I cannot veil, or droop my sight,
But am as nothing in its light :
As tho' a star, in inmost heaven set,
Ev'n while we gaze on it,
Should slowly round his orb, and slowly grow
To a full face, there like a sun remain
Fix'd—then as slowly fade again,
And draw itself to what it was before ;
So full, so deep, so slow,
Thought seems to come and go
In thy large eyes, imperial Eleanore.

VII.

As thunder-clouds that, hung on high,
Roof'd the world with doubt and fear,
Floating thro' an evening atmosphere,
Grow golden all about the sky ;
In thee all passion becomes passionless,
Touch'd by thy spirit's mellowness,
Losing his fire and active might
In a silent meditation,
Falling into a still delight,
And luxury of contemplation :
As waves that up a quiet cove
Rolling slide, and lying still
Shadow forth the banks at will :
Or sometimes they swell and move,
Pressing up against the land,

With motions of the outer sea :
 And the self-same influence
 Controlleth all the soul and sense
 Of Passion gazing upon thee.
 His bow-string slacken'd, languid Love,
 Leaning his cheek upon his hand,
 Droops both his wings, regarding thee,
 And so would languish evermore,
 Serene, imperial Eleanore.

VII

But when I see thee roam, with tresses unconfined,
 While the amorous, odorous wind
 Breathes low between the sunset and the moon ;
 Or, in a shadowy saloon,
 On silken cushions half reclined ;
 I watch thy grace ; and in its place
 My heart a charmed slumber keeps,
 While I muse upon thy face ;
 And a languid fire creeps
 Thro' my veins to all my frame,
 Dissolvingly and slowly : soon
 From thy rose-red lips my name
 Floweth ; and then, as in a swoon,
 With dinging sound my ears are rife,
 My tremulous tongue faltereth,

I lose my colour, I lose my breath,
I drink the cup of a costly death,
Brimm'd with delirious draughts of warmest life.
I die with my delight, before
I hear what I would hear from thee ;
Yet tell my name again to me,
I *would* be dying evermore,
So dying ever, Eleanore.

My life is full of weary days,
 But good things have not kept aloof,
 Nor wander'd into other ways :
 I have not lack'd thy mild reproof,
 Nor golden largess of thy praise.

And now shake hands across the brink
 Of that deep grave to which I go .
 Shake hands once more : I cannot sink
 So far—far down, but I shall know
 Thy voice, and answer from below.

II.

When in the darkness over me
 The four-handed mole shall scrape,
 Plant thou no dusky cypress-tree,
 Nor wreath thy cap with doleful crape,
 But pledge me in the flowing grape.

And when the sappy field and wood
 Grow green beneath the showery gray,
And rugged barks begin to bud,
 And thro' damp holts new-flush'd with may,
 Ring sudden scritches of the jay,

Then let wise Nature work her will,
 And on my clay her darnel grow,
Come only, when the days are still,
 And at my headstone whisper low,
 And tell me if the woodbines blow.

SONNETS.

EARLY SONNETS.

I.

TO ——.

As when with downcast eyes we muse and brood,
And ebb into a former life, or seem
To lapse far back in some confused dream
To states of mystical similitude ;
If one but speaks or hems or stirs his chair,
Ever the wonder waxeth more and more,
So that we say, " All this hath been before,
All this hath been, I know not when or where."
So, friend, when first I look'd upon your face,
Our thought gave answer each to each, so true—
Opposed mirrors each reflecting each—
That tho' I knew not in what time or place,
Methought that I had often met with you,
And either lived in either's heart and speech.

II.

TO J. M. K.

My hope and heart is with thee—thou wilt be
A latter Luther, and a soldier-priest
To scare church-harpies from the master's feast;
Our dusted velvets have much need of thee:
Thou art no sabbath-drawler of old saws,
Distill'd from some worm-canker'd homily;
But spurr'd at heart with fieriest energy
To embattail and to wall about thy cause
With iron-worded proof, hating to hark
The humming of the drowsy pulpit-drone
Half God's good sabbath, while the worn-out clerk
Brow-beats his desk below. Thou from a throne
Mounted in heaven wilt shoot into the dark
Arrows of lightnings. I will stand and mark.

III.

MINE be the strength of spirit, full and free,
Like some broad river rushing down alone,
With the selfsame impulse wherewith he was thrown
From his loud fount upon the echoing lea :—
Which with increasing might doth forward flee
By town, and tower, and hill, and cape, and isle,
And in the middle of the green salt sea
Keeps his blue waters fresh for many a mile.
Mine be the power which ever to its sway
Will win the wise at once, and by degrees
May into uncongenial spirits flow ;
Ev'n as the warm gulf-stream of Florida
Floats far away into the Northern seas
The lavish growths of southern Mexico.

IV.

ALEXANDER.

WARRIOR of God, whose strong right arm debased
The throne of Persia, when her Satrap bled
At Issus by the Syrian gates, or fled
Beyond the Memmian naphtha-pits, disgraced
For ever—thee (thy pathway sand-erased)
Gliding with equal crowns two serpents led
Joyful to that palm-planted fountain-fed
Ammonian Oasis in the waste.
There in a silent shade of laurel brown
Apart the Chamian Oracle divine
Shelter'd his unapproached mysteries :
High things were spoken there, unhanded down ;
Only they saw thee from the secret shrine
Returning with hot cheek and kindled eyes.

V.

BUONAPARTE.

HE thought to quell the stubborn hearts of oak,
Madman!—to chain with chains, and bind with bands
That island queen who sways the floods and lands
From Ind to Ind, but in fair daylight woke,
When from her wooden walls,—lit by sure hands,—
With thunders, and with lightnings, and with smoke,—
Peal after peal, the British battle broke,
Lulling the brine against the Coptic sands.
We taught him lowlier moods, when Elsinore
Heard the war moan along the distant sea,
Rocking with shatter'd spars, with sudden fires
Flamed over : at Trafalgar yet once more
We taught him : late he learned humility
Perforce, like those whom Gideon school'd with briers.

VI

POLAND.

How long, O God, shall men be ridden down,
And trampled under by the last and least
Of men? The heart of Poland hath not ceased
To quiver, tho' her sacred blood doth drown
The fields, and out of every smouldering town
Cries to Thee, lest brute Power be increased,
Till that o'ergrown Barbarian in the East
Transgress his ample bound to some new crown :—
Cries to Thee, “Lord, how long shall these things be?
How long this icy-hearted Muscovite
Oppress the region?” Us, O Just and Good,
Forgive, who smiled when she was torn in three ;
Us, who stand now, when we should aid the right—
A matter to be wept with tears of blood !

VII.

CARESS'D or chidden by the slender hand,
And singing airy trifles this or that,
Light Hope at Beauty's call would perch and stand,
And run thro' every change of sharp and flat ;
And Fancy came and at her pillow sat,
When Sleep had bound her in his rosy band,
And chased away the still-recurring gnat,
And woke her with a lay from fairy land.
But now they live with Beauty less and less,
For Hope is other Hope and wanders far,
Nor cares to lisp in love's delicious creeds ;
And Fancy watches in the wilderness,
Poor Fancy sadder than a single star,
That sets at twilight in a land of reeds.

VIII.

THE form, the form alone is eloquent !
A nobler yearning never broke her rest
Than but to dance and sing, be gaily drest,
And win all eyes with all accomplishment :
Yet in the whirling dances as we went,
My fancy made me for a moment blest
To find my heart so near the beauteous breast
That once had power to rob it of content.
A moment came the tenderness of tears,
The phantom of a wish that once could move,
A ghost of passion that no smiles restore—
For ah ! the slight coquette, she cannot love,
And if you kiss'd her feet a thousand years,
She still would take the praise, and care no more.

IX.

WAN Sculptor, weepest thou to take the cast
Of those dead lineaments that near thee lie ?
O sorrowest thou, pale Painter, for the past,
In painting some dead friend from memory ?
Weep on : beyond his object Love can last :
His object lives : more cause to weep have I :
My tears, no tears of love, are flowing fast,
No tears of love, but tears that Love can die.
I pledge her not in any cheerful cup,
Nor care to sit beside her where she sits—
Ah pity—hint it not in human tones,
But breathe it into earth and close it up
With secret death for ever, in the pits
Which some green Christmas crams with weary
bones.

X.

IF I were loved, as I desire to be,
What is there in the great sphere of the earth,
And range of evil between death and birth,
That I should fear,—if I were loved by thee?
All the inner, all the outer world of pain
Clear Love would pierce and cleave, if thou wert mine,
As I have heard that, somewhere in the main,
Fresh-water springs come up through bitter brine.
'Twere joy, not fear, claspt hand-in-hand with thee,
To wait for death—mute—careless of all ills,
Apart upon a mountain, tho' the surge
Of some new deluge from a thousand hills
Flung leagues of roaring foam into the gorge
Below us, as far on as eye could see.

XI.

THE BRIDESMAID.

O BRIDESMAID, ere the happy knot was tied,
Thine eyes so wept that they could hardly see ;
Thy sister smiled and said, " No tears for me !
A happy bridesmaid makes a happy bride."
And then, the couple standing side by side,
Love lighted down between them full of glee,
And over his left shoulder laugh'd at thee,
" O happy bridesmaid, make a happy bride."
And all at once a pleasant truth I learn'd,
For while the tender service made thee weep,
I loved thee for the tear thou couldst not hide,
And prest thy hand, and knew the press return'd,
And thought, " My life is sick of single sleep :
O happy bridesmaid, make a happy bride ! "

THE LADY OF SHALOTT.

PART I.

ON either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky ;
And thro' the field the road runs by
 To many-tower'd Camelot ;
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below,
 The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Thro' the wave that runs for ever

By the island in the river
 Flowing down to Camelot.
 Four gray walls, and four gray towers,
 Overlook a space of flowers,
 And the silent isle imbowers
 The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd,
 Slide the heavy barges trail'd
 By slow horses ; and unhail'd
 The shallop fitteth silken-sail'd
 Skimming down to Camelot :
 But who hath seen her wave her hand ?
 Or at the casement seen her stand ?
 Or is she known in all the land,
 The Lady of Shalott ?

Only reapers, reaping early
 In among the bearded barley,
 Hear a song that echoes cheerly
 From the river winding clearly,
 Down to tower'd Camelot :
 And by the moon the reaper weary,
 Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
 Listening, whispers “ ‘Tis the fairy
 Lady of Shalott.”

PART II.

THERE she weaves by night and day
A magic web with colours gay.
She has heard a whisper say,
A curse is on her if she stay
 To look down to Camelot.
She knows not what the curse may be,
And so she weaveth steadily,
And little other care hath she,
 The Lady of Shalott.

And moving thro' a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear.
There she sees the highway near
 Winding down to Camelot :
There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village-churls,
And the red cloaks of market girls,
 Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,

Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,
Goes by to tower'd Camelot ;
And sometimes thro' the mirror blue
The knights come riding two and two :
She hath no loyal knight and true,
The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights,
For often thro' the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights
And music, went to Camelot :
Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed ;
“I am half sick of shadows,” said
The Lady of Shalott.

PART III.

A Bow-shot from her bower-eaves,
He rode between the barley-sheaves,
The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,
And flamed upon the brazen greaves
Of bold Sir Lancelot.

A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field,
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy.
The bridle bells rang merrily

As he rode down to Camelot :
And from his blazon'd baldric slung
A mighty silver bugle hung,
And as he rode his armour rung,
Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burn'd like one burning flame together,
As he rode down to Camelot.

As often thro' the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd ;
On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode ;

From underneath his helmet flow'd
His coal-black curls as on he rode,
As he rode down to Camelot.
From the bank and from the river
He flash'd into the crystal mirror,
"Tirra lirra," by the river
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces thro' the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She look'd down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide ;
The mirror crack'd from side to side ;
"The curse is come upon me," cried
The Lady of Shalott.

PART IV.

IN the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complaining,
Heavily the low sky raining
Over tower'd Camelot ;

Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote
The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse—
Like some bold seer in a trance,
Seeing all his own mischance—
With a glassy countenance

Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain, and down she lay ;
The broad stream bore her far away,
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right—
The leaves upon her falling light—
Thro' the noises of the night

She floated down to Camelot :
And as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,

Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darken'd wholly,
 Turn'd to tower'd Camelot.
For ere she reached upon the tide
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
 The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery,
A gleaming shape she floated by,
Dead-pale between the houses high,
 Silent into Camelot.
Out upon the wharfs they came,
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
And round the prow they read her name,
 The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this? and what is here?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer;
And they cross'd themselves for fear,
 All the knights at Camelot:
But Lancelot mused a little space;
He said, "She has a lovely face;
God in his mercy lend her grace,
 The Lady of Shalott."

THE TWO VOICES.

A STILL small voice spake unto me,
“Thou art so full of misery,
Were it not better not to be?”

Then to the still small voice I said ;
“ Let me not cast in endless shade
What is so wonderfully made.”

To which the voice did urge reply ;
“ To-day I saw the dragon-fly
Come from the wells where he did lie.

“ An inner impulse rent the veil
Of his old husk : from head to tail
Came out clear plates of sapphire mail.

“ He dried his wings : like gauze they grew
Thro’ crofts and pastures wet with dew
A living flash of light he flew.”

I said, "When first the world began,
Young Nature thro' five cycles ran,
And in the sixth she moulded man.

"She gave him mind, the lordliest
Proportion, and, above the rest,
Dominion in the head and breast."

Thereto the silent voice replied ;
"Self-blinded are you by your pride :
Look up thro' night : the world is wide.

"This truth within thy mind rehearse,
That in a boundless universe
Is boundless better, boundless worse.

"Think you this mould of hopes and fears
Could find no statelier than his peers
In yonder hundred million spheres ?"

It spake, moreover in my mind :
"Tho' thou wert scatter'd to the wind,
Yet is there plenty of the kind."

Then did my response clearer fall :
"No compound of this earthly ball
Is like another, all in all."

To which he answer'd scoffingly ;
“ Good soul ! suppose I grant it thee,
Who'll weep for thy deficiency ? ”

“ Or will one beam be less intense,
When thy peculiar difference
Is cancell'd in the world of sense ? ”

I would have said, “ Thou canst not know,”
But my full heart, that work'd below,
Rain'd thro' my sight its overflow.

Again the voice spake unto me :
“ Thou art so steep'd in misery,
Surely 'twere better not to be.

“ Thine anguish will not let thee sleep,
Nor any train of reason keep :
Thou canst not think, but thou wilt weep.”

I said, “ The years with change advance :
If I make dark my countenance,
I shut my life from happier chance.

“ Some turn this sickness yet might take,
Ev'n yet.” But he : “ What drug can make
A wither'd palsy cease to shake ? ”

I wept, "Tho' I should die, I know
That all about the thorn will blow
In tufts of rosy-tinted snow ,

" And men, thro' novel spheres of thought
Still moving after truth long sought,
Will learn new things when I am not."

" Yet," said the secret voice, " some time,
Sooner or later, will gray prime
Make thy grass hoar with early rime.

" Not less swift souls that yearn for light,
Rapt after heaven's starry flight,
Would sweep the tracts of day and night.

" Not less the bee would range her cells,
The furzy prickle fire the dells,
The foxglove cluster dappled bells."

I said that "all the years invent ;
Each month is various to present
The world with some development.

" Were this not well, to bide mine hour,
Tho' watching from a ruin'd tower
How grows the day of human power ?"

“ The highest-mounted mind,” he said,
“ Still sees the sacred morning spread
The silent summit overhead.

“ Will thirty seasons render plain
Those lonely lights that still remain,
Just breaking over land and main?

“ Or make that morn, from his cold crown
And crystal silence creeping down,
Flood with full daylight glebe and town?

“ Forerun thy peers, thy time, and let
Thy feet, millenniums hence, be set
In midst of knowledge, dream’d not yet.

“ Thou hast not gain’d a real height,
Nor art thou nearer to the light,
Because the scale is infinite.

“ ’Twere better not to breathe or speak,
Than cry for strength, remaining weak,
And seem to find, but still to seek.

“ Moreover, but to seem to find
Asks what thou lackest, thought resign’d,
A healthy frame, a quiet mind.”

I said, "When I am gone away,
‘He dared not tarry,’ men will say,
Doing dishonour to my clay."

"This is more vile," he made reply,
"To breathe and loathe, to live and sigh,
Than once from dread of pain to die.

"Sick art thou—a divided will
Still heaping on the fear of ill
The fear of men, a coward still.

"Do men love thee? Art thou so bound
To men, that how thy name may sound
Will vex thee lying underground?

"The memory of the wither'd leaf
In endless time is scarce more brief
Than of the garner'd Autumn-sheaf.

"Go, vexed Spirit, sleep in trust;
The right ear, that is fill'd with dust,
Hears little of the false or just."

"Hard task, to pluck resolve," I cried,
"From emptiness and the waste wide
Of that abyss, or scornful pride!"

“ Nay—rather yet that I could raise
One hope that warm’d me in the days
While still I yearn’d for human praise.

“ When, wide in soul and bold of tongue,
Among the tents I paused and sung,
The distant battle flash’d and rung.

“ I sung the joyful Pæan clear,
And, sitting, burnish’d without fear
The brand, the buckler, and the spear—

“ Waiting to strive a happy strife,
To war with falsehood to the knife,
And not to lose the good of life—

“ Some hidden principle to move,
To put together, part and prove,
And mete the bounds of hate and love—

“ As far as might be, to carve out
Free space for every human doubt,
That the whole mind might orb about—

“ To search thro’ all I felt or saw,
The springs of life, the depths of awe,
And reach the law within the law :

“ At least, not rotting like a weed,
But, having sown some generous seed,
Fruitful of further thought and deed,

“ To pass, when Life her light withdraws,
Not void of righteous self-applause,
Nor in a merely selfish cause—

“ In some good cause, not in mine own,
To perish, wept for, honour'd, known,
And like a warrior overthrown ,

“ Whose eyes are dim with glorious tears,
When, soil'd with noble dust, he hears
His country's war-song thrill his ears :

“ Then dying of a mortal stroke,
What time the foeman's line is broke,
And all the war is roll'd in smoke.”

“ Yea !” said the voice, “ thy dream was good,
While thou abodest in the bud.
It was the stirring of the blood.

“ If Nature put not forth her power
About the opening of the flower,
Who is it that could live an hour ?

“ Then comes the check, the change, the fall,
Pain rises up, old pleasures pall.
There is one remedy for all.

“ Yet hadst thou, thro’ enduring pain,
Link’d month to month with such a chain
Of knitted purport, all were vain.

“ Thou hadst not between death and birth
Dissolved the riddle of the earth.
So were thy labour little-worth.

“ That men with knowledge merely play’d,
I told thee—hardly nigher made,
Tho’ scaling slow from grade to grade ;

“ Much less this dreamer, deaf and blind,
Named man, may hope some truth to find,
That bears relation to the mind.

“ For every worm beneath the moon
Draws different threads, and late and soon
Spins, toiling out his own cocoon.

“ Cry, faint not : either Truth is born
Beyond the polar gleam forlorn,
Or in the gateways of the morn.

“Cry, faint not, climb : the summits slope
Beyond the furthest flights of hope,
Wrapt in dense cloud from base to cope.

“ Sometimes a little corner shines,
As over rainy mist inclines
A gleaming crag with belts of pines.

“ I will go forward, sayest thou,
I shall not fail to find her now.
Look up, the fold is on her brow.

“ If straight thy track, or if oblique,
Thou know’st not. Shadows thou dost strike,
Embracing cloud, Ixion-like ;

“ And owning but a little more
Than beasts, abidest lame and poor,
Calling thyself a little lower

“ Than angels. Cease to wail and brawl !
Why inch by inch to darkness crawl ?
There is one remedy for all.”

“ O dull, one-sided voice,” said I,
“ Wilt thou make everything a lie,
To flatter me that I may die ?

“ I know that age to age succeeds,
Blowing a noise of tongues and deeds,
A dust of systems and of creeds.

“ I cannot hide that some have striven,
Achieving calm, to whom was given
The joy that mixes man with Heaven :

“ Who, rowing hard against the stream,
Saw distant gates of Eden gleam,
And did not dream it was a dream ;

“ But heard, by secret transport led,
Ev'n in the charnels of the dead,
The murmur of the fountain-head—

“ Which did accomplish their desire,
Bore and forbore, and did not tire,
Like Stephen, an unquenched fire.

“ He heeded not reviling tones,
Nor sold his heart to idle moans,
Tho' cursed and scorn'd, and bruised with stones :

“ But looking upward, full of grace,
He pray'd, and from a happy place
God's glory smote him on the face.”

The sullen answer slid betwixt :
“ Not that the grounds of hope were fix’d,
The elements were kindler mix’d.”

I said, “ I toil beneath the curse,
But, knowing not the universe,
I fear to slide from bad to worse.

“ And that, in seeking to undo
One riddle, and to find the true,
I knit a hundred others new :

“ Or that this anguish fleeting hence,
Unmanacled from bonds of sense,
Be fix’d and froz’n to permanence :

“ For I go, weak from suffering here :
Naked I go, and void of cheer :
What is it that I may not fear ? ”

“ Consider well,” the voice replied,
“ His face, that two hours since hath died ,
Wilt thou find passion, pain or pride ?

“ Will he obey when one commands ?
Or answer should one press his hands ?
He answers not, nor understands.

“ His palms are folded on his breast :
There is no other thing express’d
But long disquiet merged in rest.

“ His lips are very mild and meek :
Tho’ one should smite him on the cheek,
And on the mouth, he will not speak.

“ His little daughter, whose sweet face
He kiss’d, taking his last embrace,
Becomes dishonour to her race—

“ His sons grow up that bear his name,
Some grow to honour, some to shame,—
But he is chill to praise or blame.

“ He will not hear the north-wind rave,
Nor, moaning, household shelter crave
From winter rains that beat his grave.

“ High up the vapours fold and swim :
About him broods the twilight dim :
The place he knew forgetteth him.”

“ If all be dark, vague voice,” I said,
“ These things are wrapt in doubt and dread,
Nor canst thou show the dead are dead.

“The sap dries up : the plant declines.
A deeper tale my heart divines.
Know I not Death ? the outward signs ?

“I found him when my years were few ;
A shadow on the graves I knew,
And darkness in the village yew.

“From grave to grave the shadow crept :
In her still place the morning wept :
Touch'd by his feet the daisy slept.

“The simple senses crown'd his head :
‘Omega ! thou art Lord,’ they said,
‘We find no motion in the dead.’

“Why, if man rot in dreamless ease,
Should that plain fact, as taught by these,
Not make him sure that he shall cease ?

“Who forged that other influence,
That heat of inward evidence,
By which he doubts against the sense ?

“He owns the fatal gift of eyes,
That read his spirit blindly wise,
Not simple as a thing that dies.

“ Here sits he shaping wings to fly :
His heart forebodes a mystery :
He names the name Eternity.

“ That type of Perfect in his mind
In Nature can he nowhere find.
He sows himself on every wind.

“ He seems to hear a Heavenly Friend,
And thro’ thick veils to apprehend
A labour working to an end.

“ The end and the beginning vex
His reason : many things perplex,
With motions, checks, and counterchecks

“ He knows a baseness in his blood
At such strange war with something good,
He may not do the thing he would.

“ Heaven opens inward, chasms yawn,
Vast images in glimmering dawn,
Half shown, are broken and withdrawn.

“ Ah ! sure within him and without,
Could his dark wisdom find it out,
There must be answer to his doubt,

“ But thou canst answer not again.
With thine own weapon art thou slain,
Or thou wilt answer but in vain.

“ The doubt would rest, I dare not solve.
In the same circle we revolve.
Assurance only breeds resolve.”

As when a billow, blown against,
Falls back, the voice with which I fenced
A little ceased, but recommenced.

“ Where wert thou when thy father play'd
In his free field, and pastime made,
A merry boy in sun and shade ?

“ A merry boy they called him then,
He sat upon the knees of men
In days that never come again.

“ Before the little ducts began
To feed thy bones with lime, and ran
Their course, till thou wert also man :

“ Who took a wife, who rear'd his race,
Whose wrinkles gather'd on his face,
Whose troubles number with his days :

“ A life of nothings, nothing worth,
From that first nothing ere his birth
To that last nothing under earth ! ”

“ These words,” I said, “ are like the rest ;
No certain clearness, but at best
A vague suspicion of the breast :

“ But if I grant, thou mightst defend
The thesis which thy words intend—
That to begin implies to end ;

“ Yet how should I for certain hold,
Because my memory is so cold,
That I first was in human mould ?

“ I cannot make this matter plain,
But I would shoot, howe'er in vain,
A random arrow from the brain.

“ It may be that no life is found,
Which only to one engine bound
Falls off, but cycles always round.

“ As old mythologies relate,
Some draught of Lethe might await
The slipping thro' from state to state.

“ As here we find in trances, men
Forget the dream that happens then,
Until they fall in trance again.

“ So might we, if our state were such
As one before, remember much,
For those two likes might meet and touch.

“ But, if I lapsed from nobler place,
Some legend of a fallen race
Alone might hint of my disgrace ;

“ Some vague emotion of delight
In gazing up an Alpine height,
Some yearning toward the lamps of night.

“ Or if thro’ lower lives I came—
Tho’ all experience past became
Consolidate in mind and frame—

“ I might forget my weaker lot ;
For is not our first year forgot ?
The haunts of memory echo not.

“ And men, whose reason long was blind,
From cells of madness unconfined,
Oft lose whole years of darker mind.

“ Much more, if first I floated free,
As naked essence, must I be
Incompetent of memory:

“ For memory dealing but with time,
And he with matter, should she climb
Beyond her own material prime?

“ Moreover, something is or seems,
That touches me with mystic gleams,
Like glimpses of forgotten dreams—

“ Of something felt, like something here
Of something done, I know not wherè ,
Such as no language may declare.”

The still voice laugh'd. “ I talk,” said he,
“ Not with thy dreams. Suffice it thee
Thy pain is a reality.”

“ But thou,” said I, “ hast miss'd thy mark,
Who sought'st to wreck my mortal ark,
By making all the horizon dark.

“ Why not set forth, if I should do
This rashness, that which might ensue
With this old soul in organs new?

“ Whatever crazy sorrow saith,
No life that breathes with human breath
Has ever truly long’d for death.

“ ‘Tis life, whereof our nerves are scant,
Oh life, not death, for which we pant ;
More life, and fuller, that I want.”

I ceased, and sat as one forlorn.
Then said the voice, in quiet scorn,
“ Behold, it is the Sabbath morn.”

And I arose, and I released
The casement, and the light increased
With freshness in the dawning east.

Like soften’d airs that blowing steal,
When meres begin to uncongeal,
The sweet church bells began to peal.

On to God’s house the people prest :
Passing the place where each must rest,
Each enter’d like a welcome guest.

One walk’d between his wife and child,
With measured footfall firm and mild,
And now and then he gravely smiled.

The prudent partner of his blood
Lean'd on him, faithful, gentle, good,
Wearing the rose of womanhood.

And in their double love secure,
The little maiden walk'd demure,
Pacing with downward eyelids pure.

These three made unity so sweet,
My frozen heart began to beat,
Remembering its ancient heat.

I blest them, and they wander'd on :
I spoke, but answer came there none :
The dull and bitter voice was gone.

A second voice was at mine ear,
A little whisper silver-clear,
A murmur, " Be of better cheer."

As from some blissful neighbourhood,
A notice faintly understood,
" I see the end, and know the good."

A little hint to solace woe,
A hint, a whisper breathing low,
" I may not speak of what I know."

Like an *Æolian* harp that wakes
No certain air, but overtakes
Far thought with music that it makes :

Such seem'd the whisper at my side .
“ What is it thou knowest, sweet voice ? ” I cried.
“ A hidden hope,” the voice replied :

So heavenly-toned, that in that hour
From out my sullen heart a power
Broke, like the rainbow from the shower,

To feel, altho' no tongue can prove,
That every cloud, that spreads above
And veileth love, itself is love.

And forth into the fields I went,
And Nature's living motion lent
The pulse of hope to discontent.

I wonder'd at the bounteous hours,
The slow result of winter showers :
You scarce could see the grass for flowers.

I wonder'd, while I paced along :
The woods were fill'd so full with song,
There seem'd no room for sense of wrong.

So variously seem'd all things wrought,
I marvell'd how the mind was brought
To anchor by one gloomy thought ;

And wherefore rather I made choice
To commune with that barren voice,
Than him that said, " Rejoice ! rejoice ! "

THE MILLER'S DAUGHTER.

I SEE the wealthy miller yet,
 His double chin, his portly size,
 And who that knew him could forget
 • The busy wrinkles round his eyes?
 The slow wise smile that, round about
 His dusty forehead drily curl'd,
 Seem'd half-within and half-without,
 And full of dealings with the world?

In yonder chair I see him sit,
 Three fingers round the old silver cup—
 I see his gray eyes twinkle yet
 At his own jest—gray eyes lit up
 With summer lightnings of a soul
 So full of summer warmth, so glad,
 So healthy, sound, and clear and whole,
 His memory scarce can make me sad.

Yet fill my glass : give me one kiss :
My own sweet Alice, we must die.
There's somewhat in this world amiss
Shall be unriddled by and by.
There's somewhat flows to us in life,
But more is taken quite away.
Pray, Alice, pray, my darling wife,
That we may die the self-same day.

Have I not found a happy earth ?
I least should breathe a thought of pain.
Would God renew me from my birth
I'd almost live my life again.
So sweet it seems with thee to walk,
And once again to woo thee mine—
It seems in after-dinner talk
Across the walnuts and the wine—

To be the long and listless boy
Late-left an orphan of the squire,
Where this old mansion mounted high
Looks down upon the village spire :
For even here, where I and you
Have lived and loved alone so long,
Each morn my sleep was broken thro'
By some wild skylark's matin song.

And oft I heard the tender dove
 In firry woodlands making moan ;
But ere I saw your eyes, my love,
 I had no motion of my own.
For scarce my life with fancy play'd
 Before I dream'd that pleasant dream—
Still hither thither idly sway'd
 Like those long mosses in the stream.

Or from the bridge I lean'd to hear
 The milldam rushing down with noise,
And see the minnows everywhere
 In crystal eddies glance and poise,
The tall flag-flowers when they sprung
 Below the range of stepping-stones,
Or those three chestnuts near, that hung
 In masses thick with milky cones.

But, Alice, what an hour was that,
 When after roving in the woods
('Twas April then), I came and sat
 Below the chestnuts, when their buds
 Were glistening to the breezy blue ;
 And on the slope, an absent fool,
I cast me down, nor thought of you,
 But angled in the higher pool.

A love-song I had somewhere read,
An echo from a measured strain,
Beat time to nothing in my head
From some odd corner of the brain
It haunted me, the morning long,
With weary sameness in the rhymes,
The phantom of a silent song,
That went and came a thousand times.

Then leapt a trout In lazy mood
I watch'd the little circles die ;
They past into the level flood,
And there a vision caught my eye ;
The reflex of a beauteous form,
A glowing arm, a gleaming neck,
As when a sunbeam wavers warm
Within the dark and dimpled beck.

For you remember, you had set,
That morning, on the casement-edge
A long green box of mignonette,
And you were leaning from the ledge .
And when I raised my eyes, above
They met with two so full and bright—
Such eyes ! I swear to you, my love,
That these have never lost their light.

I loved, and love dispell'd the fear
That I should die an early death ·
For love possess'd the atmosphere,
And fill'd the breast with purer breath.
My mother thought, What ails the boy ?
For I was alter'd, and began
To move about the house with joy,
And with the certain step of man

I loved the brimming wave that swam
Thro' quiet meadows round the mill,
The sleepy pool above the dam,
The pool beneath it never still,
The meal-sacks on the whiten'd floor,
The dark round of the dripping wheel,
The very air about the door
Made misty with the floating meal.

And oft in ramblings on the wold,
When April nights began to blow,
And April's crescent glimmer'd cold,
I saw the village lights below ;
I knew your taper far away,
And full at heart of trembling hope,
From off the wold I came, and lay
Upon the freshly-flower'd slope.

The deep brook groan'd beneath the mill ;
And "by that lamp," I thought, "she sits !
The white chalk-quarry from the hill
Gleam'd to the flying moon by fits.
"O that I were beside her now !
O will she answer if I call ?
O would she give me vow for vow,
Sweet Alice, if I told her all ?"

Sometimes I saw you sit and spin ;
And, in the pauses of the wind,
Sometimes I heard you sing within ;
Sometimes your shadow cross'd the blind.
At last you rose and moved the light,
And the long shadow of the chair
Flitted across into the night,
And all the casement darken'd there.

But when at last I dared to speak,
The lanes, you know, were white with may,
Your ripe lips moved not, but your cheek
Flush'd like the coming of the day ;
And so it was—half-sly, half-shy,
You would, and would not, little one !
Although I pleaded tenderly,
And you and I were all alone.

And slowly was my mother brought
To yield consent to my desire :
She wish'd me happy, but she thought
I might have look'd a little higher ;
And I was young—too young to wed :
“ Yet must I love her for your sake ;
Go fetch your Alice here,” she said :
Her eyelid quiver'd as she spake.

And down I went to fetch my bride :
But, Alice, you were ill at ease ;
This dress and that by turns you tried,
Too fearful that you should not please.
I loved you better for your fears,
I knew you could not look but well ;
And dews, that would have fall'n in tears,
I kiss'd away before they fell.

I watch'd the little flutterings,
The doubt my mother would not see ;
She spoke at large of many things,
And at the last she spoke of me ,
And turning look'd upon your face,
As near this door you sat apart,
And rose, and, with a silent grace
Approaching, press'd you heart to heart.

Ah, well—but sing the foolish song
I gave you, Alice, on the day
When, arm in arm, we went along,
A pensive pair, and you were gay
With bridal flowers—that I may seem,
As in the nights of old, to lie
Beside the mill-wheel in the stream,
While those full chestnuts whisper by.

It is the miller's daughter,
And she is grown so dear, so dear,
That I would be the jewel
That trembles in her ear ;
For hid in ringlets day and night,
I'd touch her neck so warm and white.

And I would be the girdle
About her dainty dainty waist,
And her heart would beat against me,
In sorrow and in rest :
And I should know if it beat right,
I'd clasp it round so close and tight.

And I would be the necklace,
And all day long to fall and rise
Upon her balmy bosom,
With her laughter or her sighs,
And I would lie so light, so light,
I scarce should be unclasp'd at night.

A trifle, sweet ! which true love spells—

True love interprets—right alone

Iis light upon the letter dwells,

For all the spirit is his own.

So, if I waste words now, in truth

You must blame Love. His early rage

Had force to make me rhyme in youth,

And makes me talk too much in age.

And now those vivid hours are gone,

Like mine own life to me thou art,

Where Past and Present, wound in one,

Do make a garland for the heart .

So sing that other song I made,

Half-anger'd with my happy lot,

The day, when in the chestnut shade

I found the blue Forget-me-not.

Love that hath us in the net,

Can he pass, and we forget ?

Many suns arise and set.

Many a chance the years beget

Love the gift is Love the debt

Even so.

Love is hurt with jar and fret.

Love is made a vague regret.

Eyes with idle tears are wet.

Idle habit links us yet.

What is love ? for we forget :

Ah, no ! no !

Look thro' mine eyes with thine. True wife,
Round my true heart thine arms entwine
My other dearer life in life,
Look thro' my very soul with thine !
Untouch'd with any shade of years,
May those kind eyes for ever dwell !
They have not shed a many tears,
Dear eyes, since first I knew them well.

Yet tears they shed : they had their part
Of sorrow : for when time was ripe,
The still affection of the heart
Became an outward breathing type,
That into stillness past again,
And left a want unknown before ;
Although the loss that brought us pain,
That loss but made us love the more,

With farther lookings on. The kiss,
The woven arms, seem but to be
Weak symbols of the settled bliss,
The comfort, I have found in thee :
But that God bless thee, dear—who wrought
Two spirits to one equal mind—
With blessings beyond hope or thought,
With blessings which no words can find.

Arise, and let us wander forth,
To yon old mill across the wolds ;
For look, the sunset, south and north,
Winds all the vale in rosy folds,
And fires your narrow casement glass,
Touching the sullen pool below :
On the chalk-hill the bearded grass
Is dry and dewless. Let us go.

FATIMA.

O Love, Love, Love ! O withering might !
O sun, that from thy noonday height
Shudderest when I strain my sight,
Throbbing thro' all thy heat and light,
Lo, falling from my constant mind,
Lo, parch'd and wither'd, deaf and blind,
I whirl like leaves in roaring wind.

Last night I wasted hateful hours
Below the city's eastern towers :
I thirsted for the brooks, the showers
I roll'd among the tender flowers :
I crush'd them on my breast, my mouth
I look'd athwart the burning drouth
Of that long desert to the south.

Last night, when some one spoke his name,
From my swift blood that went and came
A thousand little shafts of flame
Were shiver'd in my narrow frame.

O Love, O fire ! once he drew
 With one long kiss my whole soul thro'
 My lips, as sunlight drinketh dew.

Before he mounts the hill, I know
 He cometh quickly : from below
 Sweet gales, as from deep gardens, blow
 Before him, striking on my brow.

In my dry brain my spirit soon,
 Down-deepening from swoon to swoon,
 Faints like a dazzled morning moon.

The wind sounds like a silver wire,
 And from beyond the noon a fire
 Is pour'd upon the hills, and nigher
 The skies stoop down in their desire ;
 And, isled in sudden seas of light,
 My heart, pierced thro' with fierce delight,
 Bursts into blossom in his sight

My whole soul waiting silently,
 All naked in a sultry sky,
 Droops blinded with his shining eye :
 I *will* possess him or will die
 I will grow round him in his place.
 Grow, live, die looking on his face,
 Die, dying clasp'd in his embrace.

THE DEATH OF THE OLD YEAR.

FULL knee-deep lies the winter snow,
And the winter winds are wearily sighing :
Toll ye the church-bell sad and slow,
And tread softly and speak low,
For the old year lies a-dying.

Old year, you must not die ;
You came to us so readily,
You lived with us so steadily,
Old year, you shall not die.

He lieth still : he doth not move :
He will not see the dawn of day.
He hath no other life above.
He gave me a friend, and a true true-love,
And the New-year will take 'em away.

Old year, you must not go ;
So long as you have been with us,
Such joy as you have seen with us,
Old year, you shall not go.

He froth'd his bumpers to the brim ;
 A jollier year we shall not see.
 But tho' his eyes are waxing dim,
 And tho' his foes speak ill of him,
 He was a friend to me.

Old year, you shall not die ;
 We did so laugh and cry with you,
 I've half a mind to die with you,
 Old year, if you must die.

He was full of joke and jest,
 But all his merry quips are o'er.
 To see him die, across the waste
 His son and heir doth ride post-haste,
 But he'll be dead before.

Every one for his own.

The night is starry and cold, my friend,
 And the New-year blithe and bold, my friend,
 Comes up to take his own.

How hard he breathes ! over the snow
 I heard just now the crowing cock.
 The shadows flicker to and fro :
 The cricket chirps : the light burns low :
 'Tis nearly twelve o'clock.

Shake hands, before you die.

Old year, we'll dearly rue for you :
 What is it we can do for you ?
 Speak out before you die

His face is growing sharp and thin.
Alack ! our friend is gone.
Close up his eyes · tie up his chin :
Step from the corpse, and let him in
That standeth there alone,
And waiteth at the door
There's a new foot on the floor, my friend,
And a new face at the door, my friend,
A new face at the door.

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